



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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Chartered May 28, 1970

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DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF 2019 DUES FOR LEAGUE FAMILY MEMBERS TO BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE 2019-2021 LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION IS FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH.

50th ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING: June 19-23rd, the League's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting will be held at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel. **Registration will be on Wednesday, June 19th, from 5:00 – 8:00 PM** in the Virginia Ballroom Foyer, and an **Orientation/Ice Cream Social** will take place from 7:00 – 8:30 PM the same evening. **Opening Session** will be on **Thursday, June 20th**, during which a **50th Anniversary Retrospective** of the League's past 50 years of effort, and the evolution of the accounting mission will be presented in brief by those involved in the accounting mission from the Paris Peace Accords to the present. Recognizable officials from the early post-war years through today will give brief remarks linked to archival footage, and the day will conclude with the **50th Anniversary Annual Dinner**. Headquarters and field officials from DPAA, DIA/Stony Beach and the Armed Forces DNA Lab will brief on a wide variety of field investigations, recoveries (including underwater, identification processes, disinterments, scientific advances in DNA ID processes and other initiatives, such as partnerships). The **League's Archival Research Committee** will also give a special presentation. A special event will occur on Friday evening, June 21st. On the last day, June 22nd, a three-hour **Q&A Session** will be held; all who briefed on specific areas of interest will be present to respond to questions, moderated by the League Chairman or Vice Chairman. Saturday afternoon will be the annual League business session, followed by a **League-hosted Farewell Reception**, to which all registered for the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting are invited to attend.

During the **League's** 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting, eligible individuals will be presented a Certificate of Honor from the **United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration**. If you are immediate family (parent, spouse, sibling, or child) of a US serviceman listed by DoD as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War and have not yet received a **Certificate of Honor**, be sure to attend this year's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting. On behalf of a grateful nation, each recipient will be presented a **Certificate of Honor**, an MIA lapel pin, and two Presidential Proclamations dealing with the Vietnam War Commemoration that highlight the service and sacrifice of you and your loved one. If you have any questions, please contact the Vietnam War Commemoration at: 703-697-4933; email: whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp-coh@mail.mil

50th ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM TRIBUTE RATES

INSIDE FRONT OR BACK COVER - \$1,000***

FULL PAGE (8 ½" x 11") - \$500***

½ PAGE (8 ½" x 5 ½") - \$250**

¼ PAGE (4 ¼" x 5 ½") - \$125*

BUSINESS CARD - \$50 (as submitted)

"IN HONOR OF" - \$25

(Submit name to be honored, with your name and relationship)

If possible, send camera-ready art by email to MIA101925@aol.com.

Mail hard-copy, with payment, to:

National League of POW/MIA Families

5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100

Falls Church, VA 22041

Deadline: May 24, 2019

***Donors at this level receive two League memberships, Updates & two full 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting Registrations. **Donors at this level receive one League membership, Updates & one full 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting Registration *Donors at this level receive one League membership & Updates.

UPDATE: April 11, 2019

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: On 2/25/19, DPAA announced that **Navy Reserve Journalist 3rd Class Raul A. Guerra, USN**, listed as missing on 10/8/67, was accounted for. His remains were recovered on 8/15/05 and identified on 2/20/19. On January 15, DPAA posted the accounting for **Roy F. Townley** and **Edward J. Weissenback, Air America**, listed as missing on 12/27/71, in Laos. The DPAA release on accounting for **George L Ritter, Air America** from the same incident, indicated his recovery on 12/13/17, and ID on 9/25/18. Both Townley and Weissenback were recovered late last fall and their families were notified just before Christmas, 2018. Before that, no changes in the Vietnam War statistics had been posted since October 17th when DPAA posted the names of two Vietnam War personnel now accounted for, Ritter, noted above, and **LT Richard C. Lannom, USNR, TN**, listed MIA on 3/1/68, NVN, recovered 12/13/17 and ID'd on 9/25/18.

The number still missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is now 1,589. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,246 (VN-452, VS-794); Laos-288; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7. Since chartered in 1970, the League has sought the return of all POWs, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and repatriation of all recoverable remains. The total accounted for since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is **994**. A breakdown by country of these 994 Americans is: Vietnam – 672, Laos – 277, Cambodia – 42, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, the formal end of the Vietnam War, for a grand total of 1,057. These 63 Americans, accounted for by US-only efforts in accessible areas, were not due to cooperation by post-war governments in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. Combined, a total of 285 have been accounted for from Laos, 727 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

US/VIETNAM COOPERATION: DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach (DIA/SB) field operations resumed in mid-February and recently concluded. In early December, a repatriation ceremony was held in Da Nang to conclude the last Joint Field Activity (JFA) of the calendar year that consisted of several investigation and recovery teams. 2018 ended with a US-hosted, joint commemoration to celebrate 30 years of sustained joint field operations. (The first joint recovery was in 1985, but operations were sporadic thereafter.) The pace and scope of cooperation with Vietnam continues to expand.

Chairman's Comment: The League deeply appreciates efforts by the government and people of Vietnam to work constructively and effectively to achieve the fullest possible accounting. Vietnam's cooperation has consistently improved and expanded over the last 40 years and can now be described as forward leaning, proposing initiatives and providing increased opportunities for success. Vietnam's current Ambassador to the US, H.E. Ha Kim Ngoc, is a long-time friend and colleague, working constructively with the US on the bilateral issues. He, too, was assigned decades ago to the VNOSMP (Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons). Ambassador Ngoc will likely be with us for the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting program and dinner on June 20th.

US/CAMBODIAN COOPERATION: DPAA/DIA Stony Beach investigation and recovery teams began work in mid-January at several sites that had been on hold awaiting action by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to lift the "temporary suspension" he had levied nearly 18 months earlier. On October 12th, the long-serving Prime Minister announced his decision to lift the suspension in a letter to Washington State officials, copied to the League Chairman of the Board/CEO. His action came despite continued Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sanctions for inadequate steps by Phnom Penh to accept Cambodian citizens who committed crimes and were subject to deportation according to international law. Thankfully, throughout the suspension, DIA's Stony Beach Cambodia specialist, Eric Phillips, continued to conduct case investigations. The JFA wrapped up mid-March, and investigations continued to the end of the month.

Chairman's Comment: The League is grateful that Prime Minister Hun Sen lifted the suspension, and looks forward to resuming longstanding cooperation with his full support for this important humanitarian issue. We are also grateful to Washington State Senator Ericksen and Representative Buys for their work in advocating resumption of POW/MIA operations in Cambodia. Coming just in time for the dry season, it enabled DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach to proceed with important field operations, working alongside their thoughtful, capable Cambodian counterparts. On March 22nd, a very productive and enjoyable meeting was held in DC with Cambodian Ambassador to the US Chum Sounry, and he will join us for the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Dinner.

US/LAO COOPERATION: DPAA and SB personnel recently ended field investigations and recoveries on cases of US personnel missing in northern Laos, concluding with another repatriation ceremony conducted at the Luang Prabang Airport on February 27th. Annual US-Lao consultations were held September 7th in Vientiane. Significant agreement was reached to expand support for year-round DIA/SB investigations, including agreement to add two Lao specialists to their POW/MIA Team. Joint Field Activities (JFAs) resumed, including successful completion of the site in NW Laos that resulted in the accounting for three Air America/CIA personnel, a very successful recovery effort after many years on the Master Excavation List (MEL) while awaiting a JPAC decision to excavate.

Chairman's Comment: The League looks forward to positive results from these efforts, recognizing and applauding several significant developments in POW/MIA cooperation that the Lao leadership has authorized in recent months. These include base-camping at remote locations, increasing the number of US participants on a case-by-case basis, and extensions of time on field recovery sites when justified. Despite often difficult conditions, including advance destruction of unexploded ordnance, conditions for humanitarian cooperation to account for US personnel continue to improve, for which all Americans are grateful. Hopefully, further **DHS sanctions against Laos** for failing to accept Lao nationals who long ago emigrated to the US, committed crimes and were subject to deportation according to international law and are now scheduled for legal deportation back to Laos, will not negatively impact bilateral US-Lao humanitarian POW/MIA cooperation. A very enjoyable discussion at the Lao Embassy took place on April 2nd, with new Lao Ambassador to the US Khamphan Anlavan. He has significant ASEAN and Asian experience and, most recently, was Lao Ambassador to Malaysia. He also was invited to attend the League's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting and tentatively agreed.

DPAA REACHING OUT TO HELP EDUCATE CURRENT AND FUTURE MILITARY PERSONNEL: In conjunction with travel to host the DPAA Family Member Update (FMU), on this occasion in San Jose, CA, Outreach & Communication (O&C) Director Todd Livick, COL, USA (Ret), Deputy Director Johnnie Webb, LTC USA (Ret), Jennifer Valle, Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) and other DPAA O&C staff traveled to Santa Clara University and briefed ROTC cadets as well as those from Santa Cruz, San Jose and Stanford. Reportedly, it was a positive experience for all and DPAA plans to continue to work through such channels to educate tomorrow's military. DPAA also traveled to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and briefed the Commandant, students and Foreign Area Officer class. All felt there was positive engagement and the potential for future impact as some may be assigned in counterpart nations' embassies around with world.

At the February FMU, a total of 242 family members, representing 112 losses, were in attendance, though only 44 family members, representing 16 losses, were related to the Vietnam War. That breakdown, roughly 20% of the total, is predictable, considering how relatively few of the total missing/unaccounted-for personnel (82,000 is the round number most often used) are from the Vietnam War. Currently numbering 1,589, representation by Vietnam War-related families is fairly high, if sorely outnumbered. The good news is that DPAA Director Kelly McKeague has pledged continued priority on Vietnam War investigations and recoveries for at least the next four years.

The March 23rd San Antonio FMU had a high attendance rate for first-time families; of the 350 family members, 228 (65%) were first-time attendees, most of them WWII-related: 160 WWII, representing 79 unaccounted-for US personnel; 146 Korean War, representing 70 unaccounted-for US personnel; 2 Cold War, representing 2 missing US personnel; 36 Vietnam War, representing 23 missing US personnel; 6 Desert Storm, representing 1 US serviceman. 175 individual case briefings were held.

In a further effort to create greater active-duty education on the POW/MIA accounting mission, DPAA participated in a March 21st office call/tour with USAA Executive Director, Military Advocacy Group. This meeting laid the ground work for follow on outreach efforts with USAA. Later in the day the DPAA team also briefed the Director of Military Affairs, Texas A&M, San Antonio, to inform and discuss the DPAA mission and its importance to veterans, Service Members and families.

Donate today, 501(C)3, #23-7071242, at www.pow-miafamilies.org